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Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1369 (2001) of 14 September 2001, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) until 15 March 2002. It provides an update on the deployment and activities of UNMEE, as well as on political, military, humanitarian and human rights developments since my report of 13 December 2001 (S/2001/1194).

II. Status of the Temporary Security Zone and adjacent areas

2. The situation in the Temporary Security Zone remained generally calm during the period under review. The parties continued, with few exceptions, to respect the boundaries and integrity of the Zone. There were few incidents along the southern boundary and fewer allegations exchanged by the parties. UNMEE intensified its monitoring of the redeployed forces of Eritrea through two separate monitoring operations. In addition, UNMEE was able to improve its liaison relations with Eritrean commanding officers and liaison officers at the local level, particularly in Sectors East and West. As a result, despite continued restrictions on its freedom of movement in the adjacent area north of the Temporary Security Zone, UNMEE has acquired a good understanding of developments both inside the Zone and in the areas adjacent to it. There is no evidence so far of a change of posture by either party.

3. In accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, the security arrangements are to remain in effect until delimitation and demarcation are completed. Accordingly, arrangements for the separation of forces, as achieved by the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone, will continue to be of crucial importance. Until the border demarcation has been completed, UNMEE will continue to discharge its mandate. In this connection, the public statement released by the President of Eritrea, Isaias Afwerki, on the implementation phase at the time of the Security Council mission is a source of concern.

Monitoring activities of the Mission

4. During the period under review, the monitoring operations provided the Mission with additional information on the positions and activities of Eritrean forces redeployed outside the Temporary Security Zone. At the tenth meeting of the Military Coordination Commission on 28 November, the Eritrean delegate agreed to visits to Eritrean Defence Force camps and units upon the condition of prior notification. As a result, UNMEE, accompanied by Eritrean liaison officers, visited a number of areas north of the Temporary Security Zone to which the Mission had previously not had access. That operation, although no substitute for freedom of movement, met with reasonable success despite the poor cooperation extended to UNMEE in the sector. These exercises, along with the Mission's pre-existing monitoring activities, increased the Mission's understanding of the overall situation on the ground, particularly in the areas adjacent to the Temporary Security Zone.

5. The Mission's monitoring activities showed that, although both parties carry out troop rotations, engage in routine readiness training, and continue to maintain or improve their positions, their posture remains

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essentially defensive. Tension and suspicion continue to exist between the armed forces of the parties on the ground. Eritrean Defence Force units which were engaged in farming activities for the last few months in the west of the country have started returning to their permanent locations, many of which are in Sector Centre.

Incidents along the southern boundary of the Temporary Security Zone

6. During the reporting period, there were a few incidents in the Temporary Security Zone or along its southern boundary, including occasional accidental firing, alleged crossings of the southern boundary by Eritrean militia or patrols of the Ethiopian Armed Forces, alleged cattle-rustling, and alleged abduction of villagers from the border areas. In one incident, two Eritrean shepherds were killed by unidentified assailants inside the Zone, close to the southern boundary near Om Hajer in Sector West. In another incident in the Kalahuia Hill area of Sector East, a brief exchange of fire south of the Zone between three Ethiopian soldiers and unknown assailants resulted in minor injuries to one of the soldiers. UNMEE is currently demining a route along the southern boundary in that area in order to patrol it more closely.

Militia and police inside the Temporary Security Zone

7. Despite its continued efforts, UNMEE has not succeeded in obtaining from the Government of Eritrea detailed information on the numbers, strength and disposition of Eritrean local militia and police inside the Temporary Security Zone. Ethiopian military authorities have continued to protest about the numbers of the militia and police, and to state that they are actually drawn from regular Eritrean Defence Force units. UNMEE estimates in this connection that the overall numbers of Eritrean police and local militia inside the Zone have remained roughly constant at 9,600. The Mission has observed on the ground an occasional small-scale shift in militia and police deployment in certain areas, apparently in response to local security concerns.

8. At the same time, Eritrean police or militia units sometimes seek to deploy to new locations which, in the Mission's assessment, are located too close to the southern boundary of the Zone and could therefore destabilize the situation. One such instance is the attempt on 5 February 2002 by the Eritrean police to establish a new observation post at Point 73 in Sector East, in very close proximity to the southern boundary of the Zone. UNMEE protested about this matter, explaining to the Eritrean authorities that, while that particular location is their sovereign territory, it would be unwise to deploy so close to the boundary as this could be interpreted as a provocation. Their numbers have remained roughly constant. In addition, the Mission continues to enjoy good cooperation from the police and militia on the ground, notwithstanding occasional violations of the Protocol on Militia and Police concerning the stockpiling of certain weapons and the requirement that militia and police present identification cards on demand.

Freedom of movement of the Mission

9. The Mission continued to experience restrictions on its freedom of movement, particularly in the adjacent area north of the Temporary Security Zone in Sector Centre. Despite the Mission's protests, Eritrean authorities at all levels maintain that UNMEE operations do not require freedom of movement outside the Zone. While these restrictions have eased in recent months in Sectors West and East, unfortunately little improvement has been registered in Sector Centre, where UNMEE continues to operate with minimal cooperation from the Eritrean Defence Force. Finally, the Eritrean authorities continue to restrict the Mission's freedom of movement in the air, denying United Nations aircraft the right to fly over certain locations north of the Zone.

10. On the Ethiopian side, UNMEE enjoys nearly total freedom of movement. In isolated instances, UNMEE patrols have faced restrictions in the Gheruserney and Killeli areas of Sector Centre. The Ethiopian military authorities have, however, been open and cooperative in resolving such problems. On rare occasions, UNMEE flights to particular areas have been denied.

11. Since my last report, there has still been no progress regarding the establishment of a direct high-altitude flight route for UNMEE aircraft between Asmara and Addis Ababa. Eritrea continues to maintain that UNMEE should fly the most direct route and refuses to make any other route available. The Ethiopian authorities insist, however, that UNMEE make a brief deviation from the most direct route to steer clear of anti-aircraft installations. Ethiopia has

allowed UNMEE to use any other route between the two countries. In the absence of an agreed direct route, UNMEE has been forced to fly between the two capitals via Djibouti, resulting in additional expenses to the Mission of more than US$ 1.4 million to date. The flight deviations also have serious operational and security implications for UNMEE.

Cooperation with liaison officers and local commanders

12. Ethiopian senior liaison officers continued to be readily available to UNMEE on the ground, and liaison officers at the working level regularly accompany UNMEE patrols. The Eritrean authorities have reinstated senior liaison officers in all three sectors following the Mission's protest at their earlier withdrawal. However, the liaison system on the Eritrean side is effective only in Sectors East and West. In Sector Centre, problems have continued over the availability and language ability of the senior liaison officers in question. In addition, no liaison officers have been posted at the working level.

13. Regular meetings between senior UNMEE officials and corps and divisional commanders of both the Eritrean Defence Force and the Ethiopian Armed Forces have resulted in more positive relations with these key actors. At the working level, Ethiopian commanders have been more favourably disposed towards UNMEE unit commanders and more frequently available to meet with them. In the case of the Eritrean Defence Force, the Mission's relationship with commanders at the working level differs from sector to sector. In Sectors West and East, UNMEE is able to visit Eritrean Defence Force locations and meet with their commanders if it provides prior notification. In Sector Centre, Eritrean soldiers have cited specific instructions from higher authorities in denying UNMEE passage or access.

Military Coordination Commission

14. The tenth meeting of the Military Coordination Commission was held on 28 November 2001 at the Mereb River bridge, while the eleventh meeting was held on 5 February 2002 in Djibouti. In both cases, the Commission received a comprehensive briefing from the Force Commander on the military situation in the Mission area. At the tenth meeting, it discussed the military situation in detail as well as the earlier escalation of tensions at Serha in Sector Centre. The parties were informed that UNMEE had received from each of them lists of designated sector-level officials responsible for the handling of unburied mortal remains. At the eleventh meeting, UNMEE reported on its monitoring of restricted areas north of the Temporary Security Zone, and on the continued challenges it faced. The Commission also discussed the issue of local incidents, such as those involving alleged abductions and cattle-rustling. UNMEE warned against the potential volatility, in the sensitive period ahead, of small incidents and words or deeds that could be considered provocative. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for its invaluable contribution to the work of the Military Coordination Commission.

Deployment of the Mission

15. During the period under review, there have been no major changes in the force deployment of UNMEE. The Irish Guard and Administration Company replaced the French Company on 14 December 2001. Of the 216 military observers in the Mission, representing 40 countries, 74 have been rotated since 13 December 2001. As at 5 March 2002, the total strength of the military component of UNMEE stood at 3,632 peacekeepers, 118 headquarters staff officers, and 212 military observers, for a total of 3,962 personnel (see annex II). The death in a road accident on 11 February 2002 of a Slovakian peacekeeper in Sector East is a grim reminder of the difficult conditions under which United Nations troops often operate.

Status-of-forces agreement

16. As at the time of writing, the Government of Eritrea has not signed the status-of-forces agreement, despite the request by the Security Council in resolution 1320 (2000) that the agreement be concluded by October 2000, as well as repeated appeals by myself and the Council. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1320 (2000), the model status-of-forces agreement is therefore in effect. Since my last progress report, I have once again requested the Government of Eritrea to consider signing the status-of-forces agreement with the United Nations without further delay, and suggested that we at the same time renew our efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue of HIV/AIDS. It should be recalled that the Government of Ethiopia signed a status-of-forces agreement on 22 March 2001.

III. Mine action

17. Landmines and unexploded ordnance remain a major threat to the population of the two countries and to United Nations and other humanitarian personnel operating on the ground. From December 2001 to mid-February 2002, five civilians were killed and six injured in incidents involving mines and unexploded ordnance in the Temporary Security Zone and the northern adjacent areas. These figures are tragic and indicative of the major work still required by mine action agencies in the Zone and adjacent areas.

18. On 22 January 2002, four children were killed and another four injured by an anti-personnel mine near Senafe in Sector Centre. This is by far the worst single mine accident in the Temporary Security Zone to date. The minefield was marked as a dangerous area and most of the children involved had received mine risk education training from non-governmental organization teams. This incident highlights the particular vulnerability of children to mines and unexploded ordnance. Children comprise the bulk of casualties from mine- and unexploded ordnance-related incidents. In the same area of Senafe, another mine resulted in the death of one policeman and caused serious injury to another on 8 January 2002. On 13 February, two demining personnel of the Eritrean Demining Agency were killed in a mine incident at Shilalo, in Sector West. The two men were working in a minefield when an anti-tank mine to which they were in close proximity exploded, killing one member instantly; the second member died on the way to the hospital.

19. Currently, more than 1,100 Eritrean mine action personnel work in the Temporary Security Zone; they are organized in 18 manual clearance groups, six mechanical clearance teams, six explosive ordnance disposal and survey units, 13 mine risk education teams, three survey and marking teams, and two explosive detection dog units.

20. Between 1 December 2001 and 28 February 2002, mine clearance teams set up by the Eritrean Demining Agency, the HALO Trust, the Danish Demining Group and Danish Church Aid cleared 2,133,369 square metres of minefield and battlefield areas in the Temporary Security Zone. The ordnance disposal teams of those organizations destroyed 60 anti-tank mines, 189 anti-personnel mines and 1,086 pieces of unexploded ordnance. Over the same period, Slovak, Bangladeshi and joint Slovak-Kenyan military demining units of UNMEE continued to prove routes and to clear key operational sites in all three sectors. The units cleared a total of 163.6 kilometres of road and 675,718 square metres of operational sites. UNMEE contingent ordnance disposal teams also destroyed 69 pieces of unexploded ordnance.

21. In close cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, UNMEE continued mine risk education programmes for the local population of the Temporary Security Zone and its adjacent areas. In all, some 97,000 persons have so far attended the sessions. Training of volunteer facilitators who will conduct mine risk education in their local communities is continuing, and 245 volunteers have been trained thus far. In addition, 268 schoolteachers have been trained in mine risk education and are now giving lessons during regular school hours. Finally, 320 personnel from national and international non-governmental organizations have received landmine and unexploded ordnance safety training.

22. As you will recall from my last progress report, a series of meetings at the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence in October had resulted in the exchange of vital Ethiopian mine-related information. Having studied that information, UNMEE is seeking further clarification from the Ethiopian authorities on the types of mines used in the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas, as well as more specific information on minefields already cleared by the Ethiopian Armed Forces. Delivery of this information has been promised in the near future and is eagerly awaited.

23. The UNMEE budget continues to provide for the core staff and equipment of the Mine Action Coordination Centre to enable it to carry out its coordination, technical advice and information management roles. The United Nations Mine Action Service and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have released a strategy document on United Nations assistance to mine action in Eritrea. The document outlines goals, programmes and funding requirements for United Nations assistance during the emergency phase, as well as United Nations support for strengthening national capacity to mitigate the long-term effects of landmines. The success of this strategy depends upon continuing voluntary financial support

from the international community, which I strongly encourage.

24. The demining of access routes to the border area is progressing under the coordination of the UNMEE Mine Action Coordination Centre. Since mine clearing is an essential prerequisite to demarcation, planning by the Centre is well under way so that, once the location of boundary pillar sites is known, proposals can be developed to ensure that mine clearance required for demarcation can move forward without delay.

IV. Boundary Commission

25. Since my last report, the work of the Boundary Commission has generally been proceeding in accordance with its programme, and I understand that it intends to announce its decision on delimitation in the near future. Information on the recent activities of the Commission, provided by its President, is contained in annex I to this report.

26. As members of the Security Council are aware, the activities of the Boundary Commission continue to be financed from the disbursements made by the parties, and from the United Nations Trust Fund for the Delimitation and Demarcation of the Border, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1177 (1998). Voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund currently total more than $5.9 million, while expenditures incurred as at 31 January 2002 amount to $912,000. I would like to express my appreciation to those Member States that have responded generously to my appeal for contributions to the Fund. At the same time, it is clear that additional, larger financial resources will be required for the demarcation of the border, once the Boundary Commission makes its determination on delimitation.

V. Humanitarian developments

27. The humanitarian situation throughout the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas of Eritrea and Ethiopia has remained stable, enabling humanitarian programmes and agencies to undertake a wide variety of both emergency interventions and reconstruction activities. To date more than 180,000 internally displaced persons and over 38,000 refugees have been assisted by the Government of Eritrea and the international community to return to their areas of origin inside the Temporary Security Zone. However, roughly 57,000 internally displaced persons are still unable to return to their homes, owing to the presence of mines or unexploded ordnance, insecurity or the fact that several villages are currently under Ethiopian administration.

28. Coordination remains an important aspect among all the players in the field who are working to bring the situation in Eritrea and Ethiopia out of an emergency phase and into a recovery-oriented phase. Now that the situation has stabilized, emergency operations go hand in hand with recovery and development programmes. In order to monitor these inter-linked programmes, several joint missions are being organized with UNMEE, United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations to project sites in the Temporary Security Zone, to review ongoing programmes and assess additional needs. It is an important aspect of coordination that donors, together with agencies, see how their funds are being utilized and what kind of assistance can still be provided.

29. From May 2001 to mid-February 2002, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), under a tripartite programme with the Governments of Eritrea and the Sudan, repatriated 38,634 Eritrean refugees from the Sudan, and plans to assist 60,000 more Eritreans to return home in the course of this year. While continued repatriation is contingent upon stability in the region, the rains and other factors, the major challenge is the integration of the returnees into Eritrean society. In order to facilitate the process of reintegration, UNDP and UNHCR are working together to address the social and economic reintegration needs of returning refugees, internally displaced persons, expellees and other returning populations.

30. In the month of January 2002 alone, the Eritrean Relief and Refugees Commission reported distributing 12,700 tons of food from the World Food Programme (WFP) to over 795,000 war-affected people in the Debub and Gash Barka regions, including internally displaced persons and returnees from the Sudan. Despite the good rains in this fertile area, agricultural production was adversely affected by a general lack of manpower, seeds and tools. As a consequence, food assistance will be needed throughout 2002. On the basis of nutritional surveys carried out by the Eritrean Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations, WFP has increased its distribution of

food rations to 100 per cent in the Gash Barka and Anseba zones. In addition, approximately 3,800 tons of food supplied by WFP was distributed to 195,000 drought-affected people in the northern and southern Red Sea regions. WFP will continue to support 800,000 vulnerable persons throughout 2002.

31. Supplementary feeding for children and pregnant and lactating women is ongoing both in and outside the Temporary Security Zone. More assessments are planned throughout the country to investigate the causes of malnutrition, which may result from factors other than lack of food.

32. Access to clean water continues to be one of the major priorities, particularly in the Temporary Security Zone where the water points were either destroyed or vandalized. Beyond the Zone, in the drought-affected areas, access to clean water remains a major challenge for the overall humanitarian community. UNICEF, UNDP, OXFAM and others are working to address the emergency requirements.

33. Polio eradication activities are ongoing both in and outside the Temporary Security Zone. A group of three Stop Transmission of Polio teams are in Eritrea to support the Ministry of Health in accelerating polio eradication activities in the country. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) is assisting the Ministry of Health to deal with the ongoing problem of malaria in the country.

Quick-impact projects

34. Quick-impact projects remain an important avenue of humanitarian assistance. Of the original $700,000 included in the UNMEE budget for such projects, over $693,000 has been approved for 64 projects in the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas in Eritrea and Ethiopia. The projects cover programmes in water, health, education and various other small-scale interventions, and are being implemented by local and international non-governmental organizations, local administrations, United Nations agencies, UNMEE contingents and other partners. Of the 64 approved projects, 45 are being implemented and 19 have now been completed.

35. In July 2001, a special Trust Fund to Support the Peace Process in Ethiopia and Eritrea was established to enable UNMEE to continue its support of small projects and confidence-building measures. As mentioned in my last report, the Government of Norway generously contributed approximately $250,000, and I am pleased to report that since that contribution was received an additional 13 projects valued at $180,000 have been approved. As we approach a new and critical phase in the peace process, interventions such as the quick-impact projects become even more important, and I therefore urge more donors to make contributions to this Fund.

VI. Human rights

36. UNMEE has continued to investigate allegations of cross-border expulsions and abductions. Initial reports of the expulsion of 77 civilians from Tigray State in Ethiopia proved unfounded after investigation. The civilians, who crossed the border into Eritrea voluntarily on 4 January 2002, indicated that discrimination against persons of Eritrean origin influenced their decision to leave Ethiopia. UNMEE conducted interviews of a cross-section of the residents of Eritrean origin remaining in the locality of their departure. Information obtained points to the continuing exclusion of Eritreans or persons of Eritrean descent from participation in community activities, and denial of access to social amenities, including humanitarian food aid. The Mission also investigated allegations that four teenage Eritreans were allegedly abducted and detained by Ethiopian authorities in November 2001. The four young people, aged 13 to 16 years, informed the Human Rights Office that they had left Eritrea of their own free will to avoid mandatory military service.

37. The repatriation of Ethiopians and persons of Ethiopian origin from Eritrea, assisted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has continued, although on a much reduced scale. A year ago, more than 1,000 persons were repatriated every week, while the last repatriation, on 1 February 2002, involved 134 persons. UNMEE interviewed three successive groups of persons repatriated to Ethiopia during the reporting period to ascertain the circumstances of their repatriation and the conditions under which persons of Ethiopian origin live in Eritrea. The interviews confirmed previous findings: those repatriated included individuals and families, most of whom reported that their decision to leave, although voluntary, was induced by the discrimination Ethiopians continue to face in Eritrea.

38. UNMEE interviews also showed that some of those repatriated were persons who had been held in prisons and other detention facilities, including irregular and unacknowledged detention facilities, for periods varying from a few days to several years. More than half of the 240 persons of Ethiopian origin repatriated by Eritrea with ICRC assistance on 14 December 2001 were former prisoners. The majority had been serving sentences imposed by the Special Court in proceedings that are not open to the public, and where the defendants reportedly have no legal representation. These people had been accused of offences ranging from petty theft to aircraft hijacking. The Government of Eritrea granted the prisoners amnesty on condition that they leave the country. A total of 254 persons have been repatriated to Ethiopia since my last report.

39. In the light of the forthcoming decision of the Boundary Commission on the delimitation of the border between the two countries, the Human Rights Office has focused attention on the situation of vulnerable communities in the border areas, and has increased its monitoring of the sensitive areas. At the same time, UNMEE has continued to engage the Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia on human rights issues. On 9 January 2002, a meeting was held with the Eritrean Chief of Immigration for the purpose of seeking clarification of regulations and procedures in relation to the residence and repatriation of Ethiopians, and discussing human rights concerns arising from research into the situation of Ethiopians in Eritrea.

Release and repatriation of prisoners-of-war

40. The Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia continue to hold prisoners-of-war and civilian internees despite their commitments to the contrary. On 15 January 2002, the Government of Eritrea released 25 prisoners-of-war, and expressed a readiness to release and repatriate all Ethiopian prisoners-of-war in accordance with the Algiers Peace Agreement and the Third Geneva Convention. On 18 February 2002, Eritrea released 25 more prisoners-of-war, while Ethiopia released 58 and two civilian internees. Since December 2000, a total of 937 Eritrean and 703 Ethiopian prisoners-of-war have been repatriated under ICRC auspices. However, more than 1,560 remain in Ethiopia and more than 320 in Eritrea. I once again call on both parties to abide by their obligation under the Algiers Peace Agreement and international humanitarian law and release the remaining prisoners of war unconditionally and without delay.

VII. Public information

41. In the period under review, the Mission's Public Information Office continued to perform its core function of explaining and publicizing the Mission's mandate and work. In addition, the Mission continued to report on the peace process, and to address the concerns of internally displaced persons, with particular focus on mine awareness. The Office conducted regular press briefings (through a videoconference facility linking the capitals of the two countries), arranged interviews, and facilitated access to the Temporary Security Zone for members of the media.

42. Following the suspension in October 2001 of Radio UNMEE programmes by the Eritrean authorities, UNMEE is discussing with officials of the Eritrean Ministry of Information the terms of an agreement to resume transmission of Radio UNMEE broadcasts. It is understood that, for future broadcasts and collaboration between Radio UNMEE and Eritrean Radio, airtime and access to Eritrean airwaves will be free of charge. It is hoped that agreement will also soon be reached for Radio UNMEE programmes to be given free access on Ethiopian Radio. At the same time, Radio UNMEE programmes continue to be posted by the Department of Public Information on the United Nations web site in English and six local languages.

43. The Mission's public information strategy will focus increasingly, in the period ahead, on meeting the need to disseminate information to relevant population groups inside the mission area about the processes of delimitation and demarcation of the border between the two countries and about the role of the United Nations in this regard. To that end, UNMEE is in the process of establishing outreach centres in the border area, which will also have the task of reaching out to rural areas, market places and schools through mobile teams.

VIII. Confidence-building measures

44. From 13 to 15 February 2002, Eritrean and Ethiopian religious leaders held historic meetings in Asmara and Addis Ababa. This event was facilitated by Norwegian Church Aid and supported by UNMEE,

which provided air transportation for the two delegations to and from each other's capital. The religious leaders had held six separate meetings in Norway, Germany, the United States of America and Kenya leading up to this breakthrough. The delegations of the religious leaders on both sides were headed by the leaders of the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, the Islamic community and the Evangelical Church. In both countries, the delegations met with senior Government officials to deliver their message of peace. My Special Representative reassured the religious leaders of the Mission's support, and that of the United Nations as a whole, for their efforts in the quest for peace and reconciliation between the two countries and peoples. This was an important event in confidence-building efforts between the two countries, and augurs well for future initiatives of this kind. I encourage the parties to build on this commendable initiative.

IX. Financial aspects

45. The General Assembly, by its resolution 55/252 B of 14 June 2001, authorized me to enter into initial commitments for UNMEE in the amount of $90 million (gross) for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2001. The budget for 2001-2002, as approved, is for $198,400,000 (gross) inclusive of the $90 million appropriated and assessed by the Assembly in that resolution. The proposed budget for 2002-2003 for the financing of UNMEE is to be considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on 11 and 12 March 2002. As at 31 January 2002, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNMEE amounted to $128,414,037. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $2,165,687,953.

X. Observations

46. With the Boundary Commission's decision on delimitation fast approaching, the leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia should be commended for having left much of the war legacy behind them. The successful conclusion of the peace process on the basis of a legal settlement of the conflict will set an example for the rest of the African continent, and indeed the whole international community. I have no doubt that these two neighbourly nations will greatly benefit from the peace and normalization of relations between them.

47. The delimitation and demarcation of the border represent an important milestone in the peace process, and I call on all Member States concerned, and OAU, to continue to support it, politically as well as financially. However, the implementation of the Boundary Commission's decision, which will be final and binding, will also continue to demand statesmanship on the part of the two Governments and their leaders. The success of the peace process to date is the result, first and foremost, of a close and determined adherence by the parties and the United Nations to the guiding provisions of the two Algiers Agreements. The period ahead should be no different: the ultimate success of the peace process depends on the continuing adherence to the letter and spirit of the Agreements in addition to the delimitation decision itself. The United Nations and its peacekeeping mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea will remain committed to playing a major role through delimitation and demarcation.

48. Undoubtedly, the Security Council mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea had a positive effect on the peace process. The views and observations presented in the report of the mission (S/2002/205) are fully consistent with my own, and I encourage members of the Council to reflect them in their forthcoming deliberations. The Council will no doubt continue to engage the parties and provide full support and assistance during the implementation of the delimitation decision. In the meantime, I recommend that the mandate of UNMEE be extended for six months, until 15 September 2002.

49. Depending on the outcome of the delimitation decision and the requirements for its implementation, I will revert to the Council with recommendations on the possible support which UNMEE could provide in this regard. In this connection, I will also take into account the contributions of the parties and the resources available in the Trust Fund for the Delimitation and Demarcation of the Border.

50. On 31 January, I wrote identical letters to President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, conveying to them my view that the time had come to initiate discussions on a range of issues relating to the next phase of the peace process. Accordingly, my Special Representative has been instructed, in close cooperation with OAU, to

commence discussions with the two parties on the modalities and procedures for the smooth and expeditious implementation of the Boundary Commission's decision. My Special Representative followed up with the parties, and I encourage them to respond and provide their full cooperation to UNMEE in preparing for the next crucial phase of the peace process. In this context, I recommend that a wide-ranging mechanism aimed at consultation and problem-solving during the implementation of the delimitation decision be established. In addition to the parties and UNMEE, it would be useful if the guarantors, facilitators and witnesses were also included in such a mechanism.

51. While the Boundary Commission's decision is being implemented on the ground, it will be equally important to continue assisting the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia to overcome their humanitarian difficulties. Together with reconstruction and development, however, the two parties will need assistance to attain the ultimate objective of the peace process, namely reconciliation and normalization of their bilateral relations. The United Nations strongly supports confidence-building initiatives such as the meetings of the religious leaders, and encourages the parties to search for mutually agreeable ways of building trust through increased official and unofficial contacts with each other. The international community stands ready to assist the parties in this regard.

52. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, and to all the military and civilian personnel of UNMEE, as well as to the staff of the United Nations country teams, humanitarian workers and representatives of non-governmental organizations operating on the ground, for their tireless efforts in promoting peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia. I would also like to express my gratitude for the invaluable support UNMEE has received from OAU and many Member States assisting in this important process, including troop-contributing countries.

Annex I

Eritrea/Ethiopia Boundary Commission

Fourth report on the work of the Commission

1. This is the fourth report of the Eritrea/Ethiopia Boundary Commission, covering the period from 1 December 2001 to 28 February 2002.

2. The period covered by this report is marked by two major advances in the work of the Commission.

3. First, the Commission held hearings at The Hague from 10 to 21 December 2001. Each party presented three rounds of argument and responded to questions put by the Commission.

4. Second, the Commission has, since the hearings, been actively engaged in deliberations and in the drafting of the decision on delimitation. There have also been extensive discussions between the Commissioners by correspondence. Although the Commission had originally anticipated rendering its decision by the end of February, the logistical aspects of completing such a decision, including the preparation of accompanying maps and figures, have led the Commission to revise its earlier estimate, and the decision is now expected to be rendered in the first half of April 2002.

5. Preliminary consideration is already being given to the demarcation stage of the Commission's work. As stated in the Commission's previous report, demarcation cannot begin until the prospective locations of boundary markers have been cleared of landmines. Such clearance cannot itself begin until the line of the boundary as delimited by the Commission is communicated to the parties. Thereafter, arrangements for mine clearance will be actively resumed.

6. Arrangements for the preparation of the 1:25,000 map on which the final demarcation will be marked, and which will thenceforth be the definitive boundary map, are in hand. Permission has been sought from the parties and from the neighbouring States of Djibouti and the Sudan for the overflights in the border region necessary to prepare the map, to be carried out after the delimitation decision. Both parties have already replied affirmatively.

7. The Commission expresses the hope that the Security Council, in its next resolution relating to the operation of UNMEE, will be able to extend the scope of the Mission's mandate expressly to enable it to assist the Commission in the demarcation stage of its activity and, in that connection, to accelerate the process of mine clearance.

(*Signed*) Sir Elihu **Lauterpacht**
President of the Commission
4 March 2002

Annex II

United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea: contributions as at 5 March 2002

	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*National support element*	*Troops*	*Total*
Algeria	8				8
Austria	3				3
Australia		2			2
Bangladesh	7	6		160	173
Benin	5	1			6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9				9
Bulgaria	5	2			7
Canada	6				6
China	5				5
Croatia	5				5
Czech Republic	2				2
Denmark	4				4
Finland	7	2			9
France		2			2
Gambia	4	2			6
Ghana	9	7			16
Greece	2				2
India	5	20		1 373	1 398
Ireland		12	6	206	224
Italy	2	6		148	156
Jordan	6	16		944	966
Kenya	11	13		595	619
Malaysia	7	5			12
Namibia	3	2			5
Nepal	4				4
Netherlands		2			2
Nigeria	4	4			8
Norway	5				5
Paraguay	2				2
Peru	2				2
Poland	6				6
Romania	8				8
Russian Federation	6				6
Slovakia		3	3	197	203
South Africa	5	2			7

	Military observers	*Staff officers*	*National support element*	*Troops*	*Total*
Singapore	2				2
Spain	3	2			5
Sweden	7				7
Switzerland	4				4
United Republic of Tanzania	8	3			11
Tunisia	3	3			6
Ukraine	6				6
Uruguay	6				6
United States of America	6	1			7
Zambia	10				10
Total	**212**	**118**	**9**	**3 623**	**3 962**